
ARENA REPORT

Volume 1, Number 11

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE
"Phun in Philadelphia Weekend"
February 3-5, 1989
Philadelphia, PA

Welcome everyone to the first NWA "Arena Report". I am overjoyed at finally being able to publish one of these. The format of this issue will be slightly different than the others. It will be similar to the Memphis UAWF convention issue in that we will look at each day of the get together. In this issue, we will look at the NBC Main Event special which we watched together in Philly, we'll talk about some big news regarding Ted Turner's pullout on the battle of April 2nd, and the regular features will appear as well.

"Arena Report" comes out twice a month and the cost is 50¢ an issue. A number should appear on the top left corner of this page letting you know how many issues remain on your subscription. We encourage reader participation in this report whether it be in the form of match results, letters or anything else you want to contribute. Our next report will be out in about a week and it will emanate from the New Haven Coliseum 2/13.

All renewals, match results, letters and any other correspondence may be sent to Ron Lemieux, 205 Vernon Ave. #187, Vernon, CT 06066. Well, as our luck would have it, Wednesday in the northeast it was almost 70 degrees but come Friday morning, departure day for me and Dan Reilly, it was a mixed bag of rain, sleet, and freezing rain. But Underdog wouldn't be stopped by that nor would Cliff Clavin, so me and Dan hit the slopes of I-95 and trekked on down to the "City of Brotherly Love". (I don't think Bruce Pritchard lives there.)

Friday, February 3

Jammie Ward who lives in Secane, PA which is a suburb of Philly had some of the group over to his house to watch the "Main Event". He had a nice spread out for everyone and I'd like to thank Jammie for his hospitality. On to my review of the show:

1) Hulk Hogan & Randy Savage beat Akeem & Big Boss Man in 21:47.

I thought the match was average. What really got me mad was the segment where Hulk was in the dressing room with Elizabeth after he carried her there due to her taking a bump on the outside of the ring. They were in there for about 3 minutes then went to a commercial. What happened in the ring for those 5 minutes? Liz finally told Hulk to go help Randy which he did mighty handily. Savage left Hulk by himself but hey, no problem. Hogan proceeded to wipe the ring with the Twin Towers and pin Akeem with the leg bomb. When he got back to the dressing room, him and Savage got into an argument that ended with Randy pearl harboring Hogan with the belt. He then threw Liz out of the way. (Out of the picture too so the bump probably was non-existent.) Brutus Beefcake came out to help but got nailed for his troubles. (A cheer from me.) When Hogan came to, he went looking for Macho Man and gave the Hart

- Foundation a shove as well as Jannetty and Michaels. I thought again t the match was average but the angle after the bout was real good thus I'll give it *** It got the job done for Wrestlemania V.
- 2) Ted DiBiase pinned Hercules in 7:14. This was basically a filler as nothing major happened. It was a decent bout and ended with Virgil distracting Herc until Ted came from behind to roll him up. ** $\frac{1}{2}$

After the show we went back to the hotel to join everyone else and hung around in the hotel bar. At midnight we went up to Dave Meltzer and Mike Gunter's room to watch the AWA show. After which we had a 15 person discussion on just about anything in wrestling for about 2 hours. We wrapped up the first night with an early morning breakfast at Denny's. A fight broke out while we were there between an older man and two kids. What an upset! The old guy punched the kid in the face. The nine person grading committee gave it a $\frac{1}{2}$ * as it wasn't that good of a punch and the kid refused to put his working shoes on.

Saturday, February 4

We started the day out with some sight seeing. We had two cars loaded up and off we were. We went to see the Rocky statue which graces the front steps of the Spectrum. For some reason I don't think Lance Levine is too thrilled with Sly Stallone. We then lost one of the cars as Steve Sims decided since he's the poohbah, he can drive down "Bus Only" streets. So it was now myself, Lancer, Steve, Scott Dickinson, and Greg Scatton. We went to a huge downtown mall, went to see the Liberty Bell (Snooooore) and finished up the tour by going into at least 10 record stores so Greg could look for certain albums. I don't think they carried what he bought in his homeland of Canada. And by the music I was hearing in most of these stores, they probably only carry it in Uganda. I thought Rip Morgan would jump out anytime and do the "War Haka".

At night it was on to the Philly Civic Center. Dan, Scott, Gary Fishman, and Evan Ginzburg piled into my Wrestlemobile for the short jaunt. Grades are by me and Dan. My timekeeper was the very honorable John Lanigan, excuse me, Commisioner Lanigan to you.

Opening Match

Butch Reed beat Steve Casey with a flying shoulderblock off the top rope in 11:36. Worse than horrible. You would swear Hacksaw is related to that other Hacksaw by his work rate tonight. Harry White wanted John to revoke their wrestling licenses. RL Dud DR-D-

Tag Team Match

Michael Hayes & Junkyard Dog defeated Original Midnight Express in 11:42. Paul E. took a nice bump after a Junkfood headbutt. Match was below average but the finish was fun. Hayes pinned Randy Rose with a flying bodypress. RL * $\frac{1}{2}$ DR-C

3rd Match

Rick Steiner pinned Russian Assassin #2 with a good belly to belly in 11:15. Nothing here surprisingly. The most interesting part was when the Dog Faced Gremlin lifted his leg like he was urinating on Victory. Yes, that's how bad it was. RL $\frac{1}{2}$ * DR-D

4th Match

Lex Luger pinned Commando Ray in 14:01. Lex used a sunset flip over the ropes and when Candy tried to hang on, the ref kicked his

hands enabling to get Candy down for the pin. Stupid! RL-* *that's negative*
DR-D-

5th Match

Abdullah the Butcher destroyed Bob Bradley in 4:06 with a flying elbow. Abby was supposed to team with the Roadies in the six man but it was announced that they had an altercation earlier so the Butcher instead wrestled a singles match. Typical Abby bout. He even attacked "Super Bad (?)" near the dressing room after the match. RL * $\frac{1}{2}$ for post match brawl DR-D

Six Man Tag Team Match

Road Warriors & Paul Ellering beat The Varsity Club in 15:44. The most disappointing match of the night. At one point Paul Ellering was beating up all three Club members. Give me a break. Roadies got a great reaction. So much for them being heels. Bad ending as Hawk pinned Kevin Sullivan after a bad clothesline. RL *
DR-C

Main Event

Eddie Gilbert & Sting beat Ric Flair & Barry Windham in 23:56. Parts were good and parts were so-so. It really didn't get that good until the final 10 minutes. Line of the night goes to John Lanigan, "Barry Windham can sell better than Willie Loman." The finish saw Sting roll up Windham. By the way, Hiro Matsuda was in the corner of the heels. RL *** DR-B†

Attendance was 2,300. Gary and Evan said it was the worst NWA show they had seen there. It was a very disappointing card and if I had driven 4 hours just for that show, I would not have been happy.

After the show, we went to the Marriot hotel where the wrestlers usually go for a drink or two. (more like 50.) Here are the following people we saw and some comments:

Michael Hayes- Seemed very eager to mug it up for the cameras and sign autographs. However, after he used the men's room he changed his attitude as morons were waiting near his stall for him to finish so he could sign. Now that's invasion of privacy.

Jim Ross- Very cordial. He talked to us for a good half hour and was even in the middle of an argument about Oklahoma's sanctions between John McAdam (who else) and Steve Sims.

Steve Casey- Didn't really see much of him to offer an opinion.

Randy Rose- Nice guy who obliged the fans requests.

Jack Victory- When I asked Jack for an autograph for Dan's son, he asked me if I wrote for the sheets. When I told him no he signed. I didn't lie. I don't write for the sheets, I write my own. After he signed, a really big girl walked by and he told me the N.Y. Jets should sign her up as a linebacker. Yeah, the so called "New Jersey Heart Throb" should talk. He must have gained about 50 pounds since I last saw him live in Dallas.

Ric Flair- The man himself. This guy looks like he really belongs in Hollywood. The females were all over him. The males were all calling him champ and at one point he said to Jim Ross, "Rossi, I pay these people to do this." He autographed now and then but kept saying he didn't have time.

Tommy Young- This man was on the look out for me after my good buddy (?) John Lanigan told him I was related to Mario Lemieux. Young, an avid hockey fan told John to send me over to talk to him. Considering Tommy Young's sexual preference is in question, I passed on the invite.

Lex Luger and Sting walked in about 12:45 but they went straight to the elevator and weren't seen again.

Around 1:15 we returned to our hotel where we video watched until 4:00. Well, that's when I retired. Others stayed until 6 a.m. The tradition continues.

Sunday, February 5

Just when we thought we had seen all the wrestlers we were to see, there was Abdullah the Butcher in our hotel dining room eating breakfast. Now it was just a question of who was going to interrupt his meal of cereal to ask for his signature. (I heard he asked for a 2x4 for breakfast but he was told someone named Jim had bought the last one because he left the old one on a plane.) I finally got up enough courage to go get Evan's book signed. Gary was behind me. Far behind me. Of course I waited for him to finish eating. Actually, he hadn't started. If we had waited until he finished I might still be in Philadelphia. He didn't talk but he signed everything. What did he sign? "Mr. Abdullah" Well excuse me. We also ran into Ray Candy in the lobby. He was very cordial as well. As me and Dan checked out, the last thing we saw was Rose, Victory, Abby, and Candy getting into a car and driving to D.C. for a show in suburbia. What a life!

In closing on this section of the weekend, I have to say that I had a great time. It was fun to renew all my friendships I had made in Memphis as well as see some old friends. I can only say that I'm looking forward to Convention '89 in Chi-Town. I've thanked Steve Sims privately and now I'd like to thank him publicly. Steve did a super job in organizing this weekend even though he was under no obligation to do so. I'm sure everyone who attended shares in my gratitude. Thanks again Steve!

Ramblings

There is lots of news coming out of the NWA at this time so let's get to it. As some of you may have heard, Turner has backed out of the April 2nd pay per view show. There are many reasons going around as to why but at this time I can only speculate. But the NWA will be running a live special on WTBS starting a half hour before Wrestlemania. It will emanate from the Superdome in New Orleans which is suicide. They'll be lucky to draw 3,000 in that facility... Morale in the NWA is real low right now. Talk about a reversal. When Ted Turner first purchased this group, everyone including the wrestlers and the fans were excited. But the decision of who the booker is has soured the wrestlers excitement. No one seems to have faith in George Scott. Word is that they are already looking for a replacement. Please call Oklahoma... In another matter that could cripple the NWA; someone in the office doesn't like Jim Cornette or the Midnights work. At least for what they are paying them. It seems that when their contract expires in May they won't be resigned. How do you like that. Vince could get someone he covets without a fight... Barry Windham signed a contract with the NWA last Tuesday. On the other hand, Blackjack Mulligan walked out of a board meeting due to an insane idea to lead off the April 2 show. I refuse to go into it for fear of vomiting on my paper. Just believe me, it's worse than anything Vince has ever done... The NWA has tentatively booked a show in New Haven in April. With my luck, they'll be ruined by then... The decision to bring in Hiro Matsuda surely was a stupid one. He's ten times worse than J.J. They actually have plans to have him be influential in the turning of Flair later in the year... Reportedly, the Samoan Swat Team will be

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Correspondent Reports

Kansas City Municipal Auditorium
Correspondent: Bruce Grummert

Kansas City, MO

January 21, 1989

1) Steve Casey beat Al Perez in 13:00 when Perez threw Steve over the top for a dq. 2) Abdullah the Butcher destroyed Gary Royal who was a sub for Larry Z. Match went only 2 minutes but was completely out of control as Abby went crazy. 3) Mike Rotunda & Steve Williams beat Rick Steiner & Sting in 12:29. Best match of the night. 4) Barry Windham over Eddie Gilbert when Barry used the ropes for the pin in 12:00. Barry was cut over the right eye. 5) Dick Murdoch, Lex Luger, & Michael Hayes (sub for Dusty) beat The Road Warriors & Paul Ellering when P.S. pinned Ellerat. Time was 11:08. 6) Ric Flair pinned Junkyard Dog using the ropes (PLEASE) in 18:21 of a horrendous match. 7) Rick Steiner won a bunkhouse stampede when he clotheslined Al Perez over the top rope. Att: 4,700

Omaha Civic Auditorium
Correspondent: Bruce Grummert

Omaha, NE

January 22, 1989

1) Ron Bass defeated Sam Houston (sub for Rick Martel due to visa problems) in 8:09. 2) Curt Hennig wrestled Tito Santana to a 20 minute draw in a very slow paced match. 3) Tim Horner beat Danny Davis in a nothing eight minute match. 4) Hulk Hogan beat Big Boss Man via count out when Hogan cuffed Bubba and clotheslined him over the top rope in 7:00. 5) The Rockers won on a disqualification over The Brain Busters when Tully was called for coming off the top rope onto Shawn Michaels (sounds like they should have thrown a yellow flag) 6) Ted DiBiase beat Hercules via pinfall when Virgil hit Herc in the nose with the chain. Looks like Herc bled the hard way. 7) Brutus Beefcake pinned Rick Rude using the ropes in 12:38 in a dud. Att: 9,200 Really good for a Super Bowl Sunday.

Providence Civic Center
Correspondent: Louie Fortuna

Providence, RI

February 4, 1989

1) Jim Powers pinned Conquistador #1 with a sunset flip in the corner in 15:05. 2) Rick Rude rude awakened Pete Doherty (sub for Martel) in 5:35. 3) Ultimate Warrior retained his title pinning Ted DiBiase in 1:43. You read that right. McMahon, are you an a hole or what? 4) Andre the Giant beat Jake Roberts on a dq in 9:24. Heenan was at ringside. 5) Curt Hennig used the perfect plex to pin Blue Blazer at 17:37 in a decent match but not spectacular. 6) Greg Valentine used a reverse cradle and tights to pin Jim Neidhart at 7:30. 7) Brain Busters over The Rockers in 17:27. Finish saw Michaels go for a flying head scissor and Arn grabbed him and clotheslined him on the top rope setting up the pin. Att: 6,500

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headed in to be managed by Paul E. Dangerously. Dennis Condrey will remain but in an opening match type role. No word on the future of Tom Pritchard, or Brian Pillman for that matter... In other news: Buddy Landell is being interviewed by Titan this week.. Look for Akeem and Boss Man to gain the tag belts sometime this summer. Probably a reward for being creamed by Hogan on national television... Ted DiBiase will be buying a belt. He'll have one made and start defending it. Sounds like something Terry Funk did a few years ago... The

next "Saturday Night's Main Event" will be taped 2/16 in Hershey. Not sure of air date... Here's the line-up for Wrestlemania so far: Hogan-Savage, Demolition vs. Powers and Mr. Fuji in a handicap, Rude vs. Warrior, Andre vs. Jake with Studd guest ref. (Wonder what happens there) Tully and Arn vs. Martel and Santana which should be the best match... They have a radio call in show in Philly which airs from 8-9 a.m. on Sat. Very professionally done although from most accounts I was told it was the best they've ever done when I heard it. Jerry Lawler called in and was running down Gagne. Who could blame him after everything the AWA have been saying about him on their shows... Jose Gonzales has been acquitted of murdering Bruiser Brody. Apparently, the defense came up with some sort of story saying that Brody was strung out on cocaine and he went after Gonzales and Brody accidentally stabbed himself. Hardly believable, especially when the autopsy showed nothing in Bruiser's system but aspirin.

Final Word

That's it for the first NWA edition. It was hardly a booming card but it was still enjoyable due to the company we kept. Thanks to Louie and Bruce for their reports and keep them coming. We'll see you in a week from New Haven. After that it will be 3/5 from Springfield. Take care everybody.

See ya,
Ron

P.S. (Not Hayes) Dave Meltzer & Harry White attended the Japanese show in Kansas City the night before they flew into Philly. They said the crowd was less than 700. The Tsuruta-Tenryu vs. Gordy-Hansen match was excellent as was the work of Terry Funk. Should have complete report for next week. Sorry for writing this but my ribbon cartridge ran out on me. (See Jon. You have trouble with copiers and me with ribbons.)

It looks like Roddy Piper will be back wrestling full time after his baby is born. The movie offers aren't rolling in as expected. He's already given the NWA his monetary request. Probably go to highest bidder.

I'd be remiss in thanking Dave Meltzer as a lot of the info in the "Ramblings" section is info he gave me this weekend.